

ALLIES AND PARTNE

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Asia-Pacific Defense FORUM

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Countries That Lost Citizens in the World Trade Center Attacks.

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| Antigua & Barbuda | Kenya |
| Argentina | Korea (ROK) |
| Australia | Lebanon |
| Austria | Liberia |
| Bangladesh | Luxembourg |
| Barbados | Malaysia |
| Belgium | Mexico |
| Belarus | The Netherlands |
| Belize | New Zealand |
| Bolivia | Nicaragua |
| Brazil | Nigeria |
| Canada | Norway |
| Chile | Pakistan |
| China | Panama |
| Colombia | Paraguay |
| Czech Republic | Peru |
| Dominica | Philippines |
| Dominican Republic | Poland |
| Ecuador | Portugal |
| Egypt | Romania |
| El Salvador | Russia |
| Ethiopia | Slovakia |
| France | South Africa |
| Gambia | Spain |
| Germany | Sri Lanka |
| Ghana | St. Kitts & Nevis |
| Greece | St. Lucia |
| Grenada | St. Vincent & Grenadines |
| Guatemala | Sweden |
| Guyana | Switzerland |
| Haiti | Thailand |
| Honduras | Trinidad & Tobago |
| India | Togo |
| Indonesia | Turkey |
| Iran | Ukraine |
| Ireland | United Kingdom |
| Israel | United States of America |
| Italy | Uruguay |
| Jamaica | Uzbekistan |
| Japan | Venezuela |
| Jordan | Yemen |
| Kazakhstan | Zimbabwe |

When the articles in this issue of *FORUM* were written, the 11 September murders in New York and Washington of almost 3,000 innocent men, women and children from more than 80 countries had not yet taken place. While those attacks vividly demonstrated the threat terrorism poses to security, prosperity and peaceful development, they did not achieve their intended purpose. Rather than dividing the nations of the world they brought them together, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

For any still waiting for more concrete evidence of al-Qaida's culpability in spite of the Pakistani government's almost immediate confirmation, there eventually came Osama bin Laden's own videotaped acknowledgment. Although al-Qaida terrorists declared a holy struggle, it is no sacred war, and we should all be offended that terrorists attempted to speak on behalf of one of the world's great religions. Absolutely no U.S. or international conspiracy exists against Islam; Americans and our coalition partners have fought for the lives and freedom of Muslims in Kuwait, Bosnia and Kosovo — so that they, too, could be free from the oppression of others. In fact, the United States has the greatest regard for the tolerant form of Islam practiced throughout the Asia-Pacific region, as well as in our own country.

All government leaders in the region immediately denounced the attacks, even Kim Jong-il in North Korea. America's treaty allies and many other nations immediately offered support for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM to defeat international terrorist networks and the government that provided them sanctuary. Support included armed forces for combat, mobility, intelligence, humanitarian assistance and other logistics needs. It was so rapid and extensive that the U.S. air bridge for ENDURING FREEDOM, originally planned to go eastward, went westward across the Asia-Pacific region instead.

A great deal of the support offered by Asia-Pacific countries came even before anyone knew what would happen or how long it would take. In the midst of the sorrow, that was a good news story, because it showed trust exists in the region, alongside a common resolve to live free from terrorism.

Not only were the World Trade Center and the Pentagon symbols of success and security, they were also highly populated work places. The Asia-Pacific region has both the highest and greatest number of skyscrapers in the entire world: the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, the Jin Mao Building in Shanghai, the Central Plaza and Bank of China buildings in Hong Kong, Baiyoke Tower II in Bangkok.

RS AGAINST TERRORISM

Scheduled for completion in 2008, the Centre of India Tower in Katangi will be half again as high as Petronas. Do any of us in the civilized world want our families to live in fear of being in one of these fantastic architectural achievements? Failing to confront terrorism now would mean no one could ever feel safe working at the office. Peace of mind is far too precious to let slip through one's fingers, to give away without reflection or action.

The unprovoked attacks of 11 September were conducted against regular people in major metropolises. Victims were noncombatants — office workers — men and women who had just arrived at work, sitting at their desks. They were mothers and wives who had just left their children at school; they were fathers and husbands who had just stepped off the subway. They were international businesspeople; they were struggling restaurant workers and cleaning crews. They were entire families on airplanes, with children sitting between parents. They were tourists and foreign visitors to the United States. They were firefighters and police officers trying to save others. Similar attacks could conceivably happen again to achieve effects of terror in any major city: Tokyo, Beijing, Seoul, Jakarta, New Delhi, even Honolulu.

With UN Security Council Resolution 1368 on 12 September, the murders instantly became an international issue. The world community elected "to take all necessary steps in accordance with its responsibilities under the charter of the United Nations to ... combat terrorism." This campaign is not about attempted hegemony by one country. It is a campaign centered on the defense of internationally recognized human rights, enshrined in the UN charter. It is about the right to ordinary freedoms and economic opportunities, and the right to live free from terror.

A double standard is present in the criticism directed against the international coalition against terrorism. Al-Qaida rationalized their deliberate murder of almost 3,000 innocents (and their original intent to target over 40,000 more) as a justified means to a just end. But when four civilians were unintentionally and regrettably killed in a building next to a targeted military tower on the outskirts of Kabul, terrorist sympathizers labeled the incident as an "evil" perpetrated by Americans.

In fact, aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson*, U.S. pilots were given orders not to be the "cowboys" much of the world inaccurately thinks Americans

are. Instead, even with 21st century technology on board, the pilots flew over and identified targets with an additional personal visual check before they dropped bombs, exposing themselves to greater danger. This example of American concern to prevent innocent victims from being harmed was certainly not present in the cowardly act of war that took place on 11 September. One cannot have it both ways. Hypocrisy is hypocrisy — in every faith — in every country.

With the support of the international community, American and coalition forces have now defeated the Taliban and al-Qaida forces in Afghanistan. Without his base in Afghanistan, bin Laden has lost significant parts of his organization that provide much of the foundation for international terrorist networks. The remnants are now looking for places to hide, establish new training camps and plan new operations.

Legitimate governments neither support terrorism nor willingly allow terrorists to set up bases for supporting operations. Organizations such as al-Qaida cannot achieve their goals when they allow these governments to exist. However, there are sympathetic groups and criminal elements willing to help terrorist leaders and followers find new homes and continue their murderous acts. Governments and armed forces from the region are working together to prevent this. This involves greater information sharing and coordination both among nations and among the armed forces and law enforcement agencies of each country.

The U.S. Pacific Command has established a new organization to counter terrorism. Representatives from a wide spectrum of military, law enforcement and intelligence agencies are working together in the campaign to identify and eradicate terrorists and supporting criminal organizations.

In November, General Richard Myers, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, briefed the Chiefs of Defense or their representatives from 19 Asia-Pacific nations on U.S. efforts and plans to combat international terrorism around the globe. This group of senior military officials agreed that the nations of the region share similar aspirations, problems and destinies; and should work together on common tasks such as countering terrorism and the criminal elements that support it. Over the following weeks, I traveled to those countries most concerned with terrorism, to discuss with national leaders our current efforts to combat terrorism and some practical ways to coordinate our future efforts.

The needs of each country are different. The Philippines requested and is receiving U.S. equipment and training by counterparts to defeat the Abu Sayyaf Group, which has murdered American, Filipino and other hostages, and has significantly damaged Philippine and Malaysian tourism. U.S. support to Thailand's efforts to counter illegal drug trafficking established a firm foundation for countering terrorism. Malaysia needed no support to eliminate a terrorist cell and arrest leaders of regional terrorist organizations. Information sharing has improved between India, Malaysia, Singapore and other nations.

We are fortunate that the Asia-Pacific region currently has no Afghanistan-like nation. Here, we can also carry out the campaign against terrorism with tools other than military force: diplomacy, law enforcement, intelligence, economics, business, information, media, academia, community leadership and religion. All will have enduring and important roles in the battle.

Terrorists and those who support them, including the Taliban — who destroyed the twin giant Buddha statues at Bamiyan, part of the shared cultural legacy of millions of Asians — will ultimately fail. They will not destroy our work — businesses, industry, agriculture, services or the armed forces. They will not disrupt our sports — Olympics, World Cups and Asian Games. They will not deny our hope and vision — for social progress, religious tolerance and economic development.

The campaign to defeat al-Qaida and end the practice of terrorism must be a long-term one. For as the young sons and daughters of the heroic New York firefighters and police officers who sacrificed themselves will want to follow their fathers' footsteps in spite of their fates, so too will the sons of terrorists. We must therefore teach our succeeding generations what real heroism is, convince them that innocents should not be sacrificed for selfish beliefs, and acquaint them with the ideas of tolerance and freedom.

And all potential terrorists must come to the inevitable conclusion that if Americans and our allies are murdered, the United States and the rest of the international coalition will pursue the murderers (and any who support them) to the ends of the earth. Those who seek to use terror as a weapon to sow fear and to sabotage freedom ... will find that our freedom is the very source of the strength that will ultimately eliminate terrorism. □